

## History written for St Edward's Centenary Celebrations, 23 October 2011

### Foreword

St Matthew's Gospel provides the window through which we can read with fascination how people, led by many priests since 1911, have lived this call of Christ in Whitley Bay: 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22: 34 – 40)

We won't know till the Second Coming how, as individuals and as a parish, we lived up to this vocation, but there are hopeful signs. Among the great and good of the parish are the widows who contribute their mite, the least among us are not forgotten, and the sick are warmly visited by a generous number of friends who bring the Lord with them in holy communion. Central to this year's many happy and colourful celebrations are the fundraising efforts for three charities adopted by the parish: Christian Aid mosquito nets for Africa, DePaul UK working with young people, and the new ecumenical project 'Street Pastors' caring for young people among the towns clubs and bars at night. So far over £7000.00 has been raised. For me personally as a priest living here and serving three parishes, it has been a joy to see people willingly and happily coming together organizing and supporting memorable centenary events. St Edward's continues to be blessed with very generous and big hearted people only too happy to help, led by thoughtful and compassionate leaders. The sound of laughter and good humour is spontaneous and commonplace, always a good sign that the Holy Spirit is breezing around. A special thank you to all the groups and individuals who continue to contribute to the life and work of St Edward's, to everyone involved in this year's centenary projects and celebrations, and to those who have compiled and written this parish history.

We live through uncertain times of deep change and crises in the wider world ( finance and economic upheavals, unemployment, Eurozone debts, the Arab Spring) and the Church itself ( the new Missal Translation, vocations crisis, different interpretations of the Second Vatican Council II, the legacy aftermath of child abuse cases ), but this local history reminds us that the parish has thrived and grown through major upheavals: the 1930's Depression, Two World Wars, and whole scale change in every field of human activity. Like our forebears, so long as we keep faithful to the Lord's call and build on him as our rock, there's nothing to be afraid of in the present or future: the Kingdom continues to grow, the future's bright, the future is . . . God in all things, and all shall be well, all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well.

*Fr David Russell, Co-Pastor and Resident Priest.*

### Chapter 1: The Beginning of St Edward's Parish

The first Roman Catholic parish since the Reformation in the area of what is now called North Tyneside was St Cuthbert's in North Shields, founded in 1821. This was in fact only the 5<sup>th</sup> church to be built in the diocese after the restrictions on Catholics were lifted in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. (St Andrew's in Worswick Street was the first, founded by Fr James Worswick in 1798.) Just as St Cuthbert's was originally a 'mission' sent out from St Andrew's, so in 1869 Canon John William Bewick came from St Cuthbert's to found a parish at Tynemouth. His work led to an initial small church being opened in 1871, dedicated to Our Lady and St Oswin. Canon Bewick always intended for a more permanent church to be built and had acquired the land for this before being appointed Bishop in 1882. It was to be left to his successor, Canon George Howe to build not just the 'new' church at Tynemouth but also to found the parish of St Edward's in Whitley Bay.

According to Fr Pickering's History of St Oswin's parish Canon Howe had reservations from the start about the most appropriate site for the new church at Tynemouth, since the church was to serve an area from Tynemouth to St Mary's Island. He had even tried to buy another site for his church in

Percy Park but the price was too high. So it was that in 1890 the new church of St Oswin's was opened on its present site on Tynemouth Front Street. In 1893 Canon Howe estimated the size of his parish to be 160 people. 108 were from Tynemouth, 16 from Cullercoats, and 36 from Whitley.

Of these 3 villages, Whitley was the one with the fastest growth. Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it had been little more than a farming village and was dwarfed by the busy nearby fishing village of Cullercoats. The development of the 'loop' rail line linking the town easily to Newcastle changed that however and from about the 1880s it became the 'Dream Village by the Sea'<sup>1</sup> – a suitable home for gentlemen, and the growth of the town began. The name Whitley Bay only emerged in 1901, allegedly because of a mix up over the funeral of one William Oliver of Tynemouth who had died in Scotland. His remains were due to be interred at St Paul's church in Whitley on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1901 but unfortunately were dispatched by rail from Scotland to Whitby instead of Whitley. The adoption of the name Whitley Bay was meant to avoid such confusions which were apparently not uncommon if not always as dramatic. (Mr Oliver eventually reached his final resting place at 20:45 on 19<sup>th</sup> and had to be buried by lamplight.)

As the population of Whitley grew in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, so did the Catholic population. Canon Howe used to travel to Whitley to instruct the Catholic children, often using a big room in a café. Although Canon Howe's figures for his parish in 1893 seem modest, attendance seems to have been much higher. On an August Sunday in the same year there were 96 and 216 at the two Sunday Masses at St Oswin's, and 113 at Benediction. Of these people 30 – 40 were soldiers billeted at Tynemouth Castle, and the rest were presumably seaside visitors or holiday-makers. Canon Howe began to plan for a new church to be built at Whitley to save the Catholics there from either walking along the seafront to Mass on Sundays or from having to get the 'Catholic tram' to Tynemouth, which apparently left Whitley Bay Bandstand in time to arrive at Tynemouth for the 8.45 Mass. By 1898 he had found a site in Whitley at a cost of £250 on what was then the corner of Roxburgh Terrace and Park Avenue – this was the site of Hickey's Dairy Farm previously, right near the centre of the original Whitley village. (A strip of the land had to be given up later for the widening of Park Avenue as the tram lines were extended down there to the seafront near the Spanish City). In 1899 a legacy of £3000 was left by Jane Collen 'towards the support of a priest at Whitley if and when, within a period of 21 years of her death, a Roman Catholic Mission should be instituted there'. If it were not to be used for that purpose within the stipulated time, the money was to revert to her estate. So it could be said that Jane Collen was very definitely a 'founding father/mother' of St Edward's parish in Whitley Bay.

On Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> 1911 a small brick church, big enough to hold 250 - 300 people, was opened, dedicated to St Edward who was the particular patron saint of Canon Howe. The new church was simple in style and the architect was Gibson's of North Shields and the designer Edward J. Kay of Stockton. It was constructed by William Gray who also constructed much of Park Parade and Park Avenue. The interior was described as having an oak decor with pitch pine pews. There was both electric light and heating pipes. The Shields Daily News reported the event:

"There was a large congregation yesterday morning including many visitors from Shields and Tynemouth. Mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle (Dr Collins), the choir giving a beautiful and impressive rendering of "Mass of the Sacred Heart (Gounod). Mr Nesbitt presided at the organ and the soloists were Miss K. Smith and Mr Johnson. Dean Haggarty, rector of St. Cuthbert's, North Shields, preached from the text Luke XIX:9 "This day is salvation come to this house".

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Eric Hollerton in 'Whitley Bay'

He said that the three great points with regard to the Catholic Church were , first of all, that the Holy Cross is the greatest glory, secondly, that the Holy Eucharist is the greatest treasure; and lastly, that a pious congregation is its greatest ornament. The Dean warmly commended those worshippers residing in that district who had regularly travelled for miles regardless of the weather, to attend divine service at Tynemouth or Shields, and pointed to that new church as the reward to their patience and zeal. He spoke of the dedication of the church to St Edward the Confessor, a King of England, as a link with the time when England might truly be called merry England. He looked back upon the old Catholic associations of Tynemouth reminding them of the time when the great Priory of Tynemouth flourished and when the people of that district were attended to by the monks from its sacred walls. They had many an evidence of that time: only a short distance from that church was Monkseaton – “the house of the monks”, – whose history they might consider on another occasion. There seemed to be a spirit of sacredness all round. He was sure he voiced that wish of their good bishop when he expressed the hope that the church might be filled with a pious and excellent congregation, so that they might be able to diffuse a good and holy Catholic spirit round about, among their relatives and friends, and among those who were not even of their own kith and kin.”

Both Cullercoats and Whitley Bay were cut off from St Oswin’s to form the new parish and they were joined by Monkseaton, which was cut off from St Cuthbert’s in North Shields. Canon Howe, Fr Haggarty of North Shields and Fr Goundry of Backworth had agreed these original boundaries. The Whitley Seaside Chronicle of March 11<sup>th</sup> reported that the church was to be served by priests from St Cuthbert’s parish in North Shields initially since they already had responsibility for Monkseaton. However on 2 February 1912 a priest specifically for the parish arrived in the form of Fr Patrick Kearney. There was no presbytery attached to the little church but Fr Kearney rented an unfurnished house, 13 Roxburgh Terrace, where he lived until 1926. At that point a larger house was acquired to provide for the arrival of an assistant priest. This was 69 Park Avenue.

Initially the new church at Whitley Bay was referred to as a ‘Mission’ rather than as a parish. (So perhaps we are celebrating the parish centenary a bit earlier than is canonically correct!) The bishop at the time, Richard Collins, refers to the ‘new mission’ in a letter to Canon Howe dated December 26<sup>th</sup> 1910 in which the boundaries of the ‘mission’ are agreed. It was not until December 1918 that Fr Kearney was appointed Parish Priest and St Edward’s had the status of a parish.

Within months of arriving at Whitley Bay Fr Kearney had started work on arranging for a school to be built for the Catholic children of the area. The need for this had been recognized by Canon Howe in his original plans since the only other Catholic school in the locality was at St Cuthbert’s parish. St Edward’s school was built on the remaining land on the Roxburgh Terrace plot and had the first of its children by the end of 1913, being officially opened in January 1914. The school had 5 classrooms and could accommodate 250 pupils. There were also two mezzanine rooms. In 1914 average attendance was 90.

In addition to this Fr Kearney, recognising the continuing growth of the town, had acquired a plot for a larger, more substantial, church at the corner of Coquet Avenue, opposite the Park School (later to become Coquet School.) As early as April 1913 the Shields Daily News reported that Whitley Roman Catholics were to build a ‘palatial’ church opposite the Park Hotel (now the site of the library) and that agreement had been reached to buy the site from Mr Hilton for £760. Alderman Costello was elected chairman of the committee to help raise funds by organizing a big bazaar. It was to be several years before the new church building got underway, not least because of the enormous upheaval caused by the outbreak of the First World War. The war years brought additional labours to Fr Kearney with the number of military based in the town and along the coast including regiments such as the Tyneside Irish. Trenches were dug along the beaches and trains were held ready to move civilian populations. A special Mass was held on Sundays for the soldiers and arrangements had to

be made to ensure they all received the sacraments before embarking for France. Although there was not the same threat of aerial bombardment that there was in the Second World War, there was nevertheless a real danger from the air. In August 1916 for example a zeppelin cruised over Whitley Bay on a clear night and dropped bombs which destroyed some houses in Albany Gardens. The snuffing out of the Sanctuary Lamp each evening on the instruction of the Bishop was therefore sensible.

The years between the two world wars, in spite of great economic hardship for much of the North East, saw a great expansion in Whitley Bay again, and saw further development of Whitley Bay as a seaside town. Beach Huts were built and other amusements developed. The Spanish City, built at about the same time as the first St Edward's church (in 1910) really came into its own as an attraction. The impetus to get a larger church built was strong but government priorities were for more housing initially.

In the meantime an impressive memorial was unveiled and dedicated in the small church on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November 1923 to the 17 men of the parish and members of the Tyneside Irish Brigade who had lost their lives in the war. The memorial was a painting of Christ's descent from the cross, 8'3" by 5' 9" in size, a copy of a Rubens masterpiece apparently in Antwerp Cathedral. The painting took the place of the altar piece in the church. (It was later moved to the new church and currently hangs on the side of the organ.) In addition to this the names of the fallen were inscribed in letters of gold on the central panel of an oak triptych. Their names were: Private John Barry, Trooper John Carroll, Private Louis Costelloe, Private Bernard Forster, Gunner Philip Finlay, Lance-Sergeant Felix Harretty, Corporal John Harriott, Private Louis Inganni, Private Raphal Kerass, Robert Owen King R.N., Capt. Patrick Austin Murray, Private Alfred Maguire, Capt. Chas McAllister, Sergt. John O'Donnell, Lieut. Walter Platten, Private Arthur Storey, Capt. Herbert White. At the end was inscribed; "Together with all our gallant dead of The Tyneside Irish Brigade." This oak panel is also now in the 'new' church.

The service of dedication was led by Canon Austin Magill who had been one of the original members of the Tyneside Irish Brigade Committee. He was quoted in the Shields Daily News as saying that to the Catholic heart an empty tomb or a cenotaph held little appeal but that the men they commemorated here fell 'under a cross'. He reminded the congregation that the Union Jack under which the men fought was a combination of 3 crosses. "A fitting emblem for a Christian soldier should be a cross". He paid tribute also to the unnamed donor of the painting. Eventually in 1926 building work began on the site at the end of Coquet Avenue and the new church was eventually blessed and opened by Bishop Thorman on 23 April 1928.

## **Chapter 2: The 'New' Church**

The contractors for the new church were Henry Kelly and Co who were also the contractors for the big Newcastle Exhibition of 1929. The architects were Stienlet and Maxwell. Fr John Coutts, the assistant priest at the time, acted as Clerk of Works for the project.

The Stations of the Cross for the new church were a gift from St Oswin's parish. They were the ones originally given by Canon Howe from the first temporary chapel opened by Canon Bewick in 1871. The cost of the new church, according to an account in 'The Universe' of April 27<sup>th</sup> 1928, was £15,000, and it could accommodate 500 people. (According to Fr Kearney's accounts the church actually cost £13,600 – which included the adjoining presbytery. But perhaps the Universe author included the cost of the land and other incidentals.) The article went on to describe the Romanesque style of architecture and the High Mass led by Bishop Thorman assisted by Fr James Farrow of St Mary's Cathedral and Fr John Corby of Sunderland. The choir of St Cuthbert's College Ushaw led the music and Fr George Wheatley preached. In the evening the Bishop led a solemn Benediction. After

Mass there was lunch at the Waverley Hotel on the sea front, the original name of the Rex Hotel. The Shields Daily News of April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1928 described the opening as follows:

*Nearly sixty clergymen attended the recent ceremony of blessing and consecrating (sic)<sup>2</sup> the new Catholic Church of St. Edward's, Whitley Bay, which was performed by the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle (Dr J. Thorman) today.*

*At a subsequent celebration of Pontifical High Mass the church was filled to overflowing. Following the impressively dignified ceremony of the outside walls of the building, during which the Bishop sprinkled the walls with holy water, the Litany of the Saints was sung at the entrance, and the Bishop's procession entered the church. The interior walls were also blessed by his Lordship in the presence of the congregation.*

*The preparations for Mass were only exceeded in inspiring dignity and ceremonial by the celebration of the service itself. The Bishop in his scarlet Pontifical robes had the assistance of several scarlet robed priests, who included Fathers Farrow, Kinleside, Curry, Cronin, McClean, Thompson, Scurr, Wilkinson, Watson, Madden and Pippet. In his sermon the Rev. G. Wheatley, D.D., of Stella referred to the vicissitudes through which the Catholic Church had passed in history of this country and dwelt upon the life Edward the Confessor to whom the new church had been dedicated.*

The Shields Daily News clearly considered the actual building of the church to be an adornment to the town, entitling an article on the design as "St. Edward's Church; Whitley's Architectural Acquisition." It went on to say:

*Situated on a corner site in Park Avenue and Coquet Avenue the church is fashioned in Italian Romanesque style, with an octagonal lantern tower over the four arches of the crossing, and typifying the brick churches of Northern Italy.*

In 1929 the original church on Roxburgh Terrace was converted into the parish hall and became the centre of much parish activity over the decades to come. Almost from the outset of the new church and presbytery, Madge Whillis worked in the presbytery - certainly from leaving school in 1930. She talked of the coal fires as being her 'worst enemy' and also recalled that there were no telephones and few callers to the house. She described in 1985 in an article in 'St Edward's Echo' - then the parish magazine, how Fr Kearney lived there with his "two dear Victorian sisters". Fr Malia also refers to Fr Kearney's sisters as joint housekeepers in an interview in the summer of 1986. He quoted Fr Kearney's last curate, Fr Flynn, as saying that the hierarchy in the presbytery was PP, housekeepers, then curate. The life of a curate was not always easy in years gone by. Fr Flynn apparently used to like to swim in the sea near the Panama Dip until Fr Kearney expressed disapproval. Nevertheless, Fr Kearney was remembered with great affection by parishioners like Madge and he clearly played a huge role in establishing the fledgling parish between 1912 and 1934 when he died. Another memory of Fr Kearney came from a letter written to the parish in 1988 by an ex-parishioner, Catherine J. Hindley nee Kitty Lake). Catherine wrote from Queensland of how a few days before the church was due to be opened in April 1928 she and her two brothers walked down from the school on Roxburgh Terrace in their lunch time to see how it was progressing. She was six years old at the time but remembered how the workmen were putting the final touches to the parquet flooring and that Fr Kearney was in the church giving a guided tour to Bishop Thorman. When he saw the 3 children Fr Kearney introduced them to the Bishop who gave them a blessing. The kindness of this clearly left a lasting impression on the young Catherine. Having recalled Fr Kearney's kindness it is also worth noting that Harry Fee recalls how Fr Kearney used to shout at his altar servers whilst they were serving Mass if he couldn't hear their responses!

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<sup>2</sup> In fact the church was not consecrated until 1988 on the occasion of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary

As an incidental note, at that time the Bishop lived nearby in Tynemouth, Bishop Joseph Thorman being the fourth Bishop to do so. Number 48 Front Street was known as Bishop's House. Fr Kearney died in December 1934 at the age of 70, only 6 years after the opening of the new church. Some older parishioners recall being led as children from the school to say a prayer for his soul and to see his body 'laid out' in the vestry on the eve of his funeral service. He was buried in Ashburton Catholic Cemetery in Gosforth. Two years later Bishop Thorman also died, at the age of 65. During his time at St Edwards' Fr Kearney had 6 assistant priests, Frs Brennan, Cogan, Wills, Coutts, Flynn, and Smith.

### **Chapter 3: Fr Scarr –The Early Years**

In January 1935 the parish got its second parish priest when Fr Joseph Scarr arrived, accompanied by a curate, Fr Hannan. Both were relatively young and active priests and the parish began to really develop. In spite of Whitley Bay being a comparatively well-off parish in that it included some affluent areas, there was still a lot of poverty and hardship around in the years between the wars. It was partly in response to this that the St Vincent de Paul Society had begun in the parish in 1929 and the first Ladies conference in the country was formed in 1932. These grew in strength during Fr Scarr's time at St Edward's. Kitty Lake (see above) remembered in particular the appreciation her mother felt for the support of the SVP at that time, and she remembered Mr Shanks in particular as supporting her mother. Mr Shanks's daughter, Veronica, was a founder member of that first Ladies' conference and was also to play an enormous role in the parish. Veronica played the organ at St Edward's for about 65 years.

In 1937 on the first Sunday of August it was Veronica who played the magnificent new organ in the church, installed and blessed in memory of Fr Kearney. This organ was actually a second hand one, supplied to Fr Scarr by the firm of Howden and Kent of Shortridge Terrace, Jesmond. Its original owners are unclear but Mr Kent of the firm assured Fr Scarr in a letter of July 1936 that the organ was "really first class", with all the metal pipes being of "spotted metal, that is the composition of the metal is one third is lead, and two thirds is PURE TIN." This organ was supplied and installed for the princely sum of £360. Access to the keyboard of the organ was via a vertical ladder from the ground up about 12 feet. Veronica was to climb this ladder at least once every week for the next half century.

Fr Scarr had a reputation for being 'a bit of a corker' but Fr Brian Malia, who was one of his curates in the 1960s, recalled in later years that he was good to work with. He referred to Fr Scarr as being the life and soul of the party at Deanery conferences of priests – humorous and witty and thought that Fr Scarr was essentially a shy man. Fr Malia would drive him to conferences and other events and they would have great conversations during the journeys, but as soon as they got back to the presbytery Fr Scarr would retreat to his own room and shut the door. Fr Aidan Pickering of Tynemouth recalled his own first meeting with Fr Scarr in an article in St Edward's Echo in 1985. He said he did not know then that Fr Scarr always let the telephone or doorbell ring and ring in hopes that callers would go away! When Fr Pickering, who had gone along to St Edward's to introduce himself, eventually got an answer to the door it was to be told, "Sorry, I'm taking out Communion", and the door was shut in his face! After this inauspicious start they developed a very positive relationship. Another memory of Fr Scarr was that he always celebrated Mass wearing house slippers. This was apparently because his only other footwear was a pair of stout boots which he didn't consider suitable for wearing in church.

St Edward's was in fact Fr Scarr's only parish and he spent 38 of his 53 years in the priesthood in the parish. He was a very well read and learned priest having two degrees from the Gregorian University in Rome and Fr Pickering wrote in an article for 'St Edward's Echo' in 1985 that he had a copy of a life of St Oswin written by Fr Scarr, - in Latin. In the short time between Fr Scarr arriving and the

outbreak of the next war the parish continued to grow in the range of activities taking place. Julia Judge recalls the Christmas Fayres taking place in the parish hall in Roxburgh Terrace.

Sadly much of this activity became somewhat curtailed for a while during the difficult years of 1939 to 1945. Once again the early morning Mass was said with just a shaded lamp on the altar and the Rosary and Benediction were offered every day for peace. Bombing raids became an everyday hazard, though no less frightening and dangerous for being commonplace. On the mornings after an air raid warning classes were cancelled at St Edward's school and the children just turned up in the afternoon, presumably because they would have had such disturbed sleep. With so many men called up to fight or to work in essential jobs, the women of the parish had a fire-watching rota every night to watch for incendiary devices. 1941 and 1942 saw the threat from the air at its worst. On the night of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April 1941 15 people were killed in Whitley Bay as a result of air raids and St Oswin's church at Tynemouth was damaged by blasts. On December 8<sup>th</sup> 1941 bombs were dropped in Holly Avenue, Whitley Bay, causing blast damage to St Edward's. The worst damage was done a year later however when a raid on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 1942 dropped bombs on Coquet Avenue blowing out every window in the church and tragically killing a young parishioner, Alan Roche of 21 Coquet Avenue. Alan was 17 when he was killed. There are stories of Fr Scarr himself helping to dig people out of the rubble on Coquet Avenue. The funeral register records Allan Roche's funeral taking place on December 18<sup>th</sup>, the day after the funeral of another parishioner killed in the same air raid, Oliver Hudson of Links Avenue. Fr Scarr had written below their names in the register: "Actibus hostium aere incurratum occisus est."

After these tragic events the work of clearing up the church and repairing the damage caused by shrapnel coming through the roof went ahead so that the Midnight Mass of Christmas 1942 could be celebrated in a fitting manner, even if the church was a bit draughtier than usual. The fabric of the church today has a final reminder of those war years for the sharp-sighted. The gate-posts to the presbytery on Coquet Avenue still have the faint remains of white crosses painted on to the stonework. These were put there during the blackout so that people seeking a priest during the hours of darkness would know that they were at the right house. In 1945, as well as being able to celebrate the end of the war, the parish was able to celebrate a special Mass in November on All Saints Day for the Silver Jubilee of Fr Scarr.

#### **Chapter 4: Fr Scarr 1950s - 1973**

The years after the war saw the parish become more and more active, as did the town of Whitley Bay. During the 1950s the town was in its heyday as a holiday resort. During 'Scottish Fortnight' in particular there had to be extra Masses put on each Sunday to cope with the number of visitors. Mass would be celebrated normally on a Sunday at 7.30, 9.30 and 11.00 but an extra Mass at 8.30 would be put on in the summer months. In 1959 a midday Mass was also introduced. This was of course before the coming of evening Masses, let alone the concept of a Vigil Mass. Parishioners recall every Sunday Mass being 'packed out' during the summer season.

Parish groups and activities also flourished. On October 25<sup>th</sup> 1955 the Catholic Women's League was formed with Fr Scarr taking a particular interest and choosing the Officers and Committee. At its peak the CWL at St Edward's had 130 members. In 1959 Fr Scarr asked the League if they would think seriously about working towards buying a house to be let off into bedsitters for single ladies. This was the beginning of "Stella Maris". For many years the CWL also raised money to send a sick person to Lourdes each year, and no First Communion Day was complete without a 'breakfast' prepared in the Parish Centre by the ladies of the League.

Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides also began in the 1950s and 1960s for younger parishioners. Jim Collingwood recalls that in 1952 there was one Cub pack led by Miss Whitaker and he offered to

restart a Scout troop. Initially he recruited four or five teenage boys to the troop but as time went on there were about four patrols with five or six scouts in each. Once a month on a Sunday they would meet at the Parish Hall and then march down to Mass where the Scout colours (papal colours of yellow and white) were placed on the altar. Jim recalls as an early exercise in ecumenism that the Salvation Army were very supportive of the St Edward's Troop, lending them cooking utensils and tents for camping weekends before the St Edward's Scouts had their own.

In the mid-1960s two parishioners, Pat Connors and John Lewis, formed an amateur boxing club and asked Fr Scarr for permission to use the Parish Hall for boxing training. Fr Scarr agreed on condition that the club was called St Edward's Amateur Boxing Club – henceforth known as St Edward's ABC.

During its nineteen years of existence the club raised a great deal of money for charity through holding boxing tournaments. An Army Youth Team based at Fenham Barracks approached the St Edward's ABC to offer involvement for young people in particular in a range of sporting events. As a result of this St Edward's Rifle Shooting Team was formed, using the indoor range at Fenham Barracks and an outdoor range at Ponteland. This group also took part in fellwalking and rock-climbing expeditions. From this, in 1971, was born the St Edward's ABC Fellwalking Club, again led by John Lewis who was to remain the Secretary for 20 years. Monthly walks were arranged and membership grew far beyond the parish. In response to this for a while fortnightly walks were arranged. Destinations included the Yorkshire Dales, North York Moors, the Lake District, Cheviot Hills and all over the north of England.

As time went by the Army Youth Teams disappeared and the Boxing Club ceased with the death of coach Pat Connors, but the Fellwalkers kept on walking! Another development of those years was the beginning of the Catholic Club in Whitley Bay. This had its first home in 2 rooms of the Royal Hotel, then premises in the Coliseum building, then was above what was Books' Fashion (where Fitzgerald's now is) before finding its present home on South Parade. For many years the Catholic Club was a very significant part of parish life hosting many concerts and events on its premises. Peter Kelly and Jim Straker were instrumental in getting the club started.

The Parish Hall in Roxburgh Terrace also continued to be a focus for social life. Concert parties for service people based in Whitley Bay had continued during the war years with Mrs Geeling playing the piano and through the 1950s a very active drama group was established. Julia Judge recalls that there was a junior group and a senior group and that their productions were much appreciated by the parish audiences. As well as the Scouts, Cubs, Guides and Brownies there was also a youth club, badminton club, whist drives and general social evenings.

Of course alongside all of this social activity the parish was beginning to feel the effects in the mid to late 1960s of the Second Vatican Council with the Mass being celebrated facing the people and Latin being replaced by English. Nevertheless the traditional liturgies and traditions were to continue for some time yet with May processions in honour of Our Lady and June processions in honour of the Sacred Heart. On Thursday afternoons the children from St Edward's school were walked down to the church for Benediction and they were expected to all sit at the front at the 9.30 Mass on Sunday mornings. There was also a near disaster in the church at this time when the Christmas Crib caught fire. It was thought that a fault with the electric flex powering the Christmas Star had set fire to the brown paper 'cave' in which the crib figures were displayed in front of what is now the working sacristy. Fr Scarr discovered the flames and initially tried to put out the fire himself before realizing that the Fire Brigade were needed. Fortunately no lasting damage was caused.



## **Chapter 5: School Changes and New Parishes:**

By the late 1960s the original St Edward's school built by Fr Kearney and opened in 1914 was still the parish school but was clearly no longer able to cope with the demands being made of it.

As early as 1934 requests had been made for extra classroom accommodation and for many years the church hall adjoining the school was used for two classrooms during the daytime and there was an 'overspill' classroom in the end house on Roxburgh Terrace. In the early years the school was 'Elementary' which meant that it catered for children from the age of 5 to 14 unless they left at 11 to go to a grammar school. In July 1939 tenders had been accepted for a new school to be built at West Monkseaton – the name of the new school was to be St Thomas More. The outbreak of war in September delayed these plans and the Education Act of 1944 which drastically re-ordered the school system meant that the planned school went back to the drawing board for over 20 years. Meanwhile in 1947 the school leaving age was raised to 15 which of course added to the number of pupils in every elementary school.

Back in 1914 the first Head Teacher had been Mr Joseph Nichols who took up his post on January 5<sup>th</sup> with two assistant teachers to help him with the 90 children. Memories of former pupils can produce a list of other teachers who had taught at the school over the years including Miss Ahern, Miss Bell, Miss Walker, Miss Crawley, Mr Cassidy (Head Teacher either side of World War II), Mr Balfour, Miss Robson and Miss McCormack. One ex-pupil returned to St Edward's school as a teacher in the years after World War II. Mr John Clark credited the education he received at St Edward's and the encouragement of Mr Cassidy with his later decision to become a teacher and subsequently to become a Head Teacher himself. As a new teacher back at St Edward's he recalled that his classroom was initially the one at the end of the corridor next to the Hall building before he was moved into the Hall itself. He recalled also that there were no playing fields attached to the school (just the school yards) so he had to take his boys some way on games days. At first they walked to a spot on the Links just north of the Panama Dip, and then were given a field near the Regal Cinema in West Monkseaton. The final 'home' was part of the Churchill playing fields.

Mrs Lillian Bailey was for many years in the 1950s and 1960s a caretaker of the old school and later the new one at Star of the Sea. In an interview with 'Chapter and Verse' in 1995 she described her duties at the old St Edward's school, duties in which she was helped by her husband Ossie. In particular she spoke of how at 12 o'clock every day she, with the help of four boys from Miss McCormack's class, had to clear the hall of the furniture used by the two classes which took place there in order to put out tables and chairs for dinner. After dinner every day the process had to be reversed with the two classrooms set out again for the afternoon lessons. At 4 o'clock every day when the children had gone home she and Ossie had to clean the hall so it could be used in the evening for the Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Guides and so on. On Saturdays there were often jumble sales in there and for the rest of the weekend boxing training took place. It was clearly a much used hall. To complete her long day, Lillian and Ossie used to return to lock up the hall at 10 o'clock and to set it out again for the next day's lessons. During two weeks of the summer holidays the hall was transformed with bunk beds in order to house the children from Nazareth House so they could have a holiday by the seaside. The nuns who accompanied the children used to sleep each night in the staff room.

At the time that Lillian was the caretaker the Head Teacher was Mr Donnelly. Both she and Mr Donnelly were still with the school when it was at long last to move to a new site – and to acquire a new name, Star of the Sea, being no longer the parish school. The final day for the St Edward's was July 19<sup>th</sup> 1968. The children went home the previous day for their summer holidays and were to reconvene on September 4<sup>th</sup> at a brand new school at West Monkseaton. There were 299 children

from the parishes of St Edward's and the Immaculate Heart of Mary on that first day. Mr Donnelly was still the Head Teacher and he was accompanied by his staff from St Edward's.

In the years since Star of the Sea opened there have been only two other Head Teachers, Mr Martin Burke who took up his post in 1973, and Mr Michael Willcock who succeeded him in 1994 and has just retired in this parish centenary year.

In 1959 a Catholic secondary school for the Tynemouth borough was opened after twenty years of planning and striving on Lynn Road, North Shields. The original hope had been that while St Anselm's would provide the 'Secondary Modern' part of Catholic secondary education for the area there would be a huge Catholic Grammar/Technical school built on Rake Lane to serve the whole of South East Northumberland. The coming of comprehensive education in 1965 put an end to this plan but St Anselm's had to wait until 1971 before it was allowed to officially become comprehensive. Further change came in 1974 when, as part of the reorganisation of the Local Authorities in England Tynemouth Borough became part of North Tyneside. The parish priests of North Tyneside then set up a working party to consider the amalgamation of St Anselm's and St Aidan's secondary school in Wallsend. It was to take until 1988 for this work to bear fruit when the two schools amalgamated and finally moved on to one site in 1989 under the new name of St Thomas More. Since then of course St Thomas More School has gone from strength to strength and provides "officially outstanding" education for the young Catholics of the whole of North Tyneside.

The reference earlier to the parish of The Immaculate Heart of Mary was a pointer to another major change to take place in the parish during Fr Scarr's time as parish priest. Not only had the school outgrown its premises, but the expansion of housing into West Monkseaton and inland from Cullercoats brought about the creation of two new parishes in what had been St Edward's. The Immaculate Heart parish was formed exactly 50 years after the parish of St Edwards', in 1961 when Fr Scarr gave the first parish priest, Fr Tom Laidler, a house, (8 Sandringham Drive), a field, and £10,000. Ten years later a new church was built in Cullercoats, St Mary's, to be served from St Oswin's. Again Fr Scarr contributed £10,000 towards the cost and agreed to move his parish boundary to the old Tynemouth boundary thus giving the Fr Pickering 400 more parishioners. So the old boundaries agreed by Canon Howe and Bishop Richard Collins in 1910 were redrawn.

Meanwhile, in 1970, the parish of St Edward's celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Fr Scarr's ordination to the priesthood. As well as a Mass of Thanksgiving the parish celebrated with a special presentation evening held at the Park Hotel in Tynemouth on Tuesday November 3<sup>rd</sup>. As a special gift the parish had arranged for him to have a trip to the Holy Land. Fr Pickering in remembering this occasion commented on how much Fr Scarr enjoyed this trip. He had hoped to be able to retire at this point in time, but, recognising the growing shortage of priests in the diocese, (a situation which was of course not nearly as extreme as in current times), he stayed an extra 3 years until he was 78. By this time it was clear that Fr Scarr's health was failing and he did retire, planning to spend time studying and reading. He moved to stay with Fr Pickering at Tynemouth although his successor at St Edward's, Fr Richard Cass, was more than willing for him to stay put in the parish where he had lived for the past 38 years. Fr Scarr was adamant however that he needed to move on in case of confusion about who was now the parish priest. In September 1973 he preached his last sermon at St Edward's quoting the words of St Thomas More, "Pray for me as I will for thee that we may merrily meet in heaven." He also welcomed Fr Cass with the words, "I hope your successor is not born yet".

Sadly, after a month of happy retirement at Tynemouth Fr Scarr's health failed and after a short time in hospital he died. After his requiem Mass at St Edward's he was buried at Whitley Bay cemetery. A year after his death a new altar in the church was unveiled and dedicated to him. In later years the

stained glass window of King Edward the Confessor above the main door to the church was also installed as a memorial to Fr Scarr. But more of that later.

### **Chapter 6: Fr Cass –A New Era**

The third parish priest for the parish of St Edward was born in 1930 in Newton, Kilkenny and began his priestly ministry in Hexham and Newcastle shortly after his ordination in 1954, joining his older brother Fr Tom Cass in the diocese. St Edward's was Fr Dick's first experience as a parish priest, and he was to serve out his ministry, and his life, in the service of the parish, just as his two predecessors had done.

Fr Scarr had already set in motion the various changes which were needed in the church as a result of the tide of change which Vatican II had set in motion and Fr Cass was to continue these where needed. In 1978, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the new church building, he wrote of the need to not be afraid of change but to see a certain amount of change as necessary if the parish was to grow and develop as a Christian community.

The Golden Jubilee was celebrated over several days in April 1978 starting with a sung Mass by the children of Star of the Sea School and a variety show in the Alletsa Ballroom with entertainment by parishioners including students from Star of the Sea and St Anselm's schools.

There was then on Friday April 21<sup>st</sup> a Concelebrated Mass of Thanksgiving with all those priests who had served at St Edward's over the previous 50 years invited to concelebrate. There was then a social event at the Catholic Club. On Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> there was a special Mass of Anointing for the sick of the parish followed by a social event at the nearby Social Services Hall and a Youth Jubilee Disco in the evening. Finally on Sunday April 23<sup>rd</sup> there was a parish Day of Renewal where baptismal promises were renewed at each of the 4 Masses that day. (Mass times were then at 7.30, 9.30, 11.00 and 6.30 in the evening.)

And if that weren't enough, a Jubilee Celebration Dinner Dance took place in October. The celebratory mood of the parish continued in 1979 with the Silver Jubilee of Fr Cass's ordination to the priesthood. Among the surprise gifts given to Fr Cass by the parish was a car, and a complete set of vestments made by the ladies of the parish and presented at the Mass of Thanksgiving. The great care which went into the preparations of these vestments indicated the affection in which Fr Cass was held and also showed the cooperative spirit of the parish. Sheila Clapperton recalls that the ladies of the parish who had thought of making new vestments waited until Fr Cass was away before announcing the idea in church and inviting anyone who would like to be involved to attend a planning meeting. The response was so great that it was agreed that a full set of vestments would be made consisting of chasubles and stoles in purple, red, green and white, two cottas, a new Monstrance cover and new linings for the tabernacle.

Although it was necessary to send away for the fabric to get the correct liturgical colours most of the trimmings were taken from old vestments. The work was shared out, with groups taking responsibility for the different colour vestments and the cottas and for the monstrance cover and tabernacle linings. Mrs McPartlin, one of the group involved, made the white vestment which was beautifully embroidered and worn at the Silver Jubilee Mass.

Finally, when Fr Cass was away again any other ladies who wanted to be involved were invited to Sheila's house so they could put some stitches in the now almost finished vestments. On the Silver Jubilee day the white vestments were carefully carried to the house. Everything else was assembled at church and during the offertory procession a long line of parishioners presented their work to Fr

Cass. Sheila recalls that although Fr Cass had insisted that he wanted no fuss, he was delighted that the whole parish had been involved in the making of his gifts.

Another 'gift' given to Fr Cass on this occasion was the arranging of a competitive golfing event. Everyone knew that one of Fr Cass's favourite ways of unwinding was to play a round of golf, often with his brother or other priest friends. (He never tired of the joke from the pulpit that he was about to 'go on a course' – everyone knowing which sort of course he meant.) So in June 1979 a golfing event was organised by some of the golfers in the parish. Originally it was thought that there might be about 8 players, then 15, until eventually on June 8<sup>th</sup> there were 48 competitors, all playing £4 a head, at Whitley Bay Golf Club. Afterwards more than 200 people danced at a Ceildhe in the Catholic Club with refreshments and a meal provided. From this beginning, as Gerry Rafferty explained in a December 1999 edition of 'Chapter and Verse', came an annual event which grew in stature and reputation. In 1981, on its third anniversary, it became known as the Cass Classic. By 1999, the year in which Fr Cass died, there were 150 competitors and the competition was played over 4 Tyneside courses.

Celebrating, socialising and enjoying the company of people were all key characteristics of Fr Cass. Significantly however, these were all set in the context of his belief in spiritual renewal based on the Word of God. A love of scripture and a recognition of the centrality of the Eucharist in parish life drove his ministry at St Edward's.

'Renewal weekends', led by Fr Cass in the Parish Centre on Roxburgh Terrace, (which was expanded and developed in the 1970s under Fr Cass's direction) became a feature of parish life in the 1980s. The 'Mustard Seed' talks were also started, originally in a café of the same name on the corner of Oxford Street in Whitley Bay. These were opportunities for Catholics or non-Catholic 'enquirers' to explore what being a Catholic was really all about by way of weekly meetings stretching over about 8 months from October to June each year. Through the Mustard Seed many people came to find, or re-find, faith and the parish continued to grow. As well as the well-established groups such as the Catholic Women's League and the Society of St Vincent de Paul, numerous other groups developed in the parish including the Prayer Group and the Justice and Peace Group. As a snapshot of the amount of activity going on, the Autumn 1985 edition of 'St Edward's Echo' lists all the following groups as being attached to the parish:

Parish Social Committee; Bus Committee (to take children to Star of the Sea School); St Vincent de Paul Society; Catechists; Catholic Women's League; Folk Group; Keep Fit; Lourdes Committee; Scouts; Girl Guides; Brownies; Cubs; Play Group; Parent and Toddler Group; 3-Score Link Club (for the elderly and/or disabled); Justice and Peace Group; Society for the Unborn Child; Marriage Encounter; Parish Centre Management Committee; Youth Club; Prayer Group; and the Parish Magazine group.

At this point in time there were four Sunday Masses each weekend, all very well attended. There was a Vigil Mass on Saturdays at 6.30pm, and a 9.00am, 11.00am and a 6.30 pm Mass on Sundays. Of course there was also, up to 1994, a curate to assist the Parish Priest.

In 1988, on the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee, the 'new' church underwent a big refurbishment which meant that for almost three months everyone had to cram back into the original church on Roxburgh Terrace for Mass. On June 13<sup>th</sup> the reordered and redecorated church was not just re-opened, but consecrated by Bishop Lindsay. In addition to a new roof, the altar rails and marble pulpit (which had been positioned about a third of a way down the left hand aisle) were removed and the altar was brought forward towards the people. This left the area on the sanctuary behind the altar and in front of the tabernacle to be a more quiet area for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, an area which has been much used since for the daily prayer of the church, for Holy Hours and for informal liturgies. A 'narthex' was also added on to the side of the church, giving some

much needed space for all the 'non-liturgical' activities which take place in the church. Over recent years a popular use has been for Fair Trade stalls. For a short while (before the presbytery was altered) it was also used for meetings and for the children's liturgy on Sundays. The narthex meant that the main door of the church, whilst still used for funerals or weddings, became largely redundant. This was a deliberate decision because of the huge rise in traffic passing within a few feet of the church door down Park Road – a volume of traffic not dreamed of back in 1928.

During the following decade the parish continued to develop and to hold on to the legacy of the past years whilst working to meet the needs of a changing world and of a changing church. Fr Cass was concerned after the sad death of his last curate in 1994 (Fr Jim McCue) that he would be unable to reach effectively into every corner of the parish. For many years there had been a 'parish representative' system with the parish divided into areas and each area having a nominated representative to keep everyone in touch with the centre. From the 1980s the parish had also had a large number of 'Special Ministers', usually referred to as 'Eucharistic Ministers', who helped with the distribution of Holy Communion as Mass and who also took Holy Communion to the sick and housebound, a recognition of the fact that one parish priest could not possibly visit all the sick every week, or even every couple of weeks. These ideas came together for Advent 1995 as a result of discussions at the Mustard Seed in that year and careful planning took place so that during a designated two week period there would be an Advent Eucharistic Service in every area of the parish with Holy Communion taken from the church in ciboria by Ministers to be distributed at the services. An amazing 43 services took place during that first fortnight with much prayer, as well as practical preparations, ensuring that all went well. The format was repeated the following year and became twice yearly at one point, during Advent and also during the run-up to Pentecost. The role of Fr Cass himself was crucial in all this, manning the presbytery and praying in union with those taking part whilst the services took place. In many ways this venture typified Fr Cass's contribution to the parish of St Edward – prayerfully and carefully releasing the 'priesthood of the laity' and using the potential of his parishioners so that instead of one pair of hands there were hundreds.

In 1997 there was a particularly significant birthday in the parish when Veronica Shanks, who had been part of the parish since its origin, celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. As mentioned earlier, Veronica's father had helped to found the SVP in the parish back in the Roxburgh Terrace days, and she herself had been a founder member of the Ladies Conference in the parish – the first in the country. In addition to this Veronica had played the organ in church for 64 years, which meant until 1994 climbing the steep ladder each Sunday to the organ loft. (In 1994, as well as being cleaned and overhauled, the organ was provided with a new oak finished console at ground level, connected to the original organ of 1937.) In addition to all this Veronica was a great champion of the Mill Hill Missions, organising the collection of the little red boxes which were for many years a feature of parish life across the country. Veronica's particular dedication to this cause had a family root. Her brother, Mgr. George Shanks, had been a Mill Hill Missioner among the poor of India. Mgr. Shanks had a remarkable vocation working in Kashmir for twenty years from the 1930s, getting caught up in the momentous events – and conflict – sparked by the Independence of India and Partition in 1947. At the age of thirty eight when the civil war broke out he was described in the Daily Express at the time as 'the hero of Baramula' after keeping 77 people safe, including Hindu and Sikh women, during a 10 day siege. In 1952 he was appointed the first Prefect Apostolic for the region of Jammu and Kashmir and continued in that post until his return home due to illness in 1961. Tragically, after a break at his family home in Marden Terrace, Cullercoats, he died on his way back to Kashmir, still a young man.

Veronica's birthday was marked at Mass with much singing of Happy Birthday by First Communicants whose 'Going Forth' Mass it was, by flowers and by a papal blessing presented by Fr Cass for her years of service.

In 1998 the parish celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the church building by hosting a very dynamic mission led by a group of missionaries from Ghana in West Africa. In June 1999 St Edward's parish suffered one of its worst blows when, suddenly and unexpectedly, Fr Cass died. On the evening of Friday June 4<sup>th</sup> he had called in to the birthday celebration of a parishioner and stayed for a short while to share in the event – a typical action from Fr Cass who always enjoyed the company of his parishioners and friends and who knew how much they appreciated his presence. As he left the celebration he collapsed and never regained consciousness, dying the following morning in the hospital where he had been taken. Amidst the great sorrow of the parish and of all those who loved him was the consolation that, as his heartbroken brother Fr Tom said, his last day on earth had been 'wonderful'. They had found time to play nine holes of golf together (which Fr Dick won), and then Fr Cass celebrated Mass in St Edward's for the Justice and Peace group before joining the birthday celebration in North Shields. In between he had time to talk to various parishioners about matters close to his heart, including the 'word of God' for that Sunday's Mass.

At Fr Cass's funeral on Friday June 11<sup>th</sup> the packed church overflowed on to the streets with people from all walks of life wanting to pay their respects and give thanks for his great ministry. The eulogy was preached by Fr Bill O'Gorman, a great friend of both the Cass brothers, who began it with the words of St Irenaeus, "The Glory of God is the human person fully alive". That summed up perfectly the life of St Edward's third parish priest.

#### **Chapter 7: Since 1999**

The fact that St Edward's parish, like many others in the diocese and indeed the country, had only had one priest since 1994, in other words no curate, was a reflection of the reality that there were far fewer priests available than in the past. The history of St Edward's parish in the years after Fr Cass's death meant that the parish had to quickly come to terms with that new reality.

At the time of the centenary St Edward's is now used to being part of a 'cluster' of parishes in the eastern part of North Tyneside. Initially the cluster consisted of the three parishes of St Edward's, St Edmund's in Backworth and Immaculate Heart in West Monkseaton, all served by the same priest. It then extended to include St Oswin's in Tynemouth and St Mary's in Cullercoats, and St Cuthbert's in North Shields and St Joseph's at Chirton. This cluster arrangement allows for the sharing of resources more effectively, and specifically for the sharing of the scarce resource of the priest himself. St Edward's now has only one Mass on a Sunday, at 11.00am.

Canon Howe would no doubt have been surprised to see how the parishes which grew from St Cuthbert's mission to Tynemouth have now come together again as one, but with the great advantage of having several beautiful church buildings, vibrant and active congregations, and years as communities of faith to strengthen and sustain them.

Thanks are due to all the priests who have served St Edward's since 1999 including our current co-pastor who is resident in the parish house, Fr David Russell. The uncertainties of the last 12 years have perhaps reinforced the belief of the parish that change must be embraced whilst faith in the parish as a Eucharistic community is sustained.

#### **St Edward's Church and Presbytery in 2011**

As has already been described, substantial changes were made to the original 1928 building in 1988. Further developments have continued to be made since to ensure that the actual church itself is always a fit place for worship and to make best use of the other parts of the building, including the presbytery.

On the run-up to the millennium the presbytery was altered to provide a separate apartment on the first floor for the resident priest, when needed, and to provide space for the parish to use on the ground floor, including a kitchen which could serve refreshments for parish events or after Mass on Sundays. This space in the parish house is a very valuable resource and has resolved what was always a bit of a problem for the parish, namely that the Parish Centre, the old church in Roxburgh Terrace, was a bit too far away from the new church to be convenient. Over the years since the 1980s it is true to say that the Parish Centre had been used less and less by the parish itself and more and more as a community centre for the area as a whole. Faced with the prospect of huge bills to make the Centre safe and usable the decision was taken a few years ago to 'mothball' the building. This is the current situation with the Roxburgh Terrace site.<sup>3</sup>

One of the significant developments over recent years in the church itself is the number of wonderful stained glass windows which have been installed. When the church was first built there were none. Particularly remarkable is the fact that they are all the work of parishioner Paul Gannon who has brought his profession in glass into his other service in the parish. (Paul serves Mass almost every Sunday at 11am alongside John Robinson.) The first window appeared in 1985 and is the middle of the '3 sisters' above the main entrance. It depicts St Edward the Confessor and was dedicated to the memory of Fr Scarr in a ceremony led by Fr Cass on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1985. At the ceremony Fr Cass offered the following thoughts:

"To appreciate the beauty of the window it is necessary to look at it from the inside. Similarly, to fully appreciate the beauty of the Catholic Church we must look at it from the inside. The only way to see the beauty of the window from the outside is for there to be light coming through it from inside the church. In the same way, people outside our Catholic church will only appreciate its beauty if we inside are a beacon of light."

Following the St Edward's window, Paul created modern round stained glass windows for the inside of the dome above the sanctuary of the church, and a small window of St (Pope) Pius X on the north transept. Above this small window were placed three windows rescued from St Margaret's Methodist church (which was in St Margaret's Road, Cullercoats, and demolished in the 1990s.) These windows were restored and painstakingly repaired by Paul before being installed in St Edward's. They depict the Angel Gabriel, the Good Shepherd, and St Michael the Archangel. Since the year 2000 Paul has installed no less than 13 more beautiful windows in the church. In the south transept are windows depicting the Nativity (our millennium window), Our Lady of Lourdes (dedicated to the memory of Fr Cass) and St Bernadette. In the north transept next to Pope Pius X are Gerard Majella, dedicated to the memory of Mrs Mary Finch, and St Vincent de Paul, dedicated to another staunch member of the SVP, Mr Frank Fairley.

In the south aisle are windows depicting the Visitation (dedicated to Bill and Mary Dyne), the Nativity (dedicated to Elaine Goss), the Annunciation (dedicated to Veronica Shanks) and Our Lady Queen of Heaven (dedicated to Brenda Brady). On the opposite aisle are windows of St Bede, St Cuthbert and St Aidan (dedicated separately to Harold and Edmund Atkinson, twin brothers who were parishioners of St Edward's for many years, and to them jointly 'reunited in fraternal love'), and a very unusual window of Mary, Star of the Sea, complete with a small St Mary's lighthouse in the background and a depiction of the ship on which Jim Fatkin (in whose memory the window was dedicated) served for many years before his retirement when he began another life of service to the parish.

Most of Paul's windows are inspired by the work of the Atkinson Brothers factory (a well-known Newcastle firm in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) but three in the north aisle (Annunciation, Visitation and Nativity) are in the style of Myer of Munich.

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<sup>3</sup> The Parish Centre was sold in January 2014.

It is interesting to think how much Fr Kearney, and indeed Fr Scarr and Fr Cass, would have appreciated how much the church building has been, and continues to be beautified by all this work. It is good to consider also that our loved parishioners commemorated by these windows represent the whole host of people whose lives have been entwined by being part of the family of faith which is the parish.

### **Acknowledgments**

This short history was compiled from the reminiscences of too many parishioners to mention by name, from articles written over a 15 year period for 'St Edward's Echo' and 'Chapter and Verse' (both parish magazines at different time periods), from information on the website maintained by Chris Judge and from previous histories written of the parish and of neighbouring parishes, notably Fr Pickering's history of the parish of Our Lady and St Oswin's at Tynemouth.

The story of St Edward's continues in the new Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea and will be added to in the near future.

### **Postscript**

*One of the gifts of this history is the way in which it weaves the people, structures and buildings associated with St Edward's into a rich tapestry of the faith which has sustained the mission of the Catholic Church in this part of North Tyneside. That process has continued since the church's centenary celebrations under the leadership of succeeding parish priests such as Fr Paul Southgate, Fr Gerry Lee and Fr David Russell, and the continuing cooperation of parishioners.*

*The amalgamation of the former parishes of Our Lady's and St Edmunds Backworth, Immaculate Heart of Mary West Monkseaton, and St Edward's Whitley Bay in December 2013 to form the new Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea, demonstrates how the Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church's mission to meet the challenges of the ever-changing circumstances of today.*